627 underground newspapers

New youth press laid to vacuum

By Campbell Watson

The underground press now numbers hundreds of publications with a distribution in excess of three million because it ness and obscenity, it was adfills a vacuum left by the estab- mitted. lishment newspapers.

It will continue as long as publishers fail to meet the need of today's youth, said two journalism education investigators in a report to the CNPA Newspaper Workshop here September 11-12,

It is the creation basically of young people who are visually oriented and who realize that graphics express emotion. It performs important services in some areas. All underground papers are not obscene, they added.

Double base

These papers were established "because of conditions in society, as the establishment press left a vacuum," said Robert Glessing of California's Canada College Journalism faculty.
Their circulation is three

times the million distribution of the college press, said the educator whose book, The Underground Press in America, is scheduled for publication next Spring.

Glessing, who interviewed 30 underground press editors nccross the country in developing his volume, lists the Villago Voice as the largest. He credits this with 13,000 paid purchasers, \$140,000 a week in revenues and ad-loaded editions which run to 72 tabloid pages.

Paul Slater, graduate Journalism student at the University of California here who has just completed his master's thesis on this subject, reports 627 underground papers.

Shifting list

While many small papers come and go, a dozen are significant, Slater told the meeting headed by Eric Colby, Terra Linda (Calif.) News. One is an Audit Bureau of Circulations member, he reported. This is the Los Angeles Free Press, established in 1964, one year before the Berkeley Barb.

Underground press papers as a whole are hippie, psychedelic and political. Its members want to be politically involved and in that sense are political, he declared.

Those who call themselves members of the alternative press use their own news network.

BERKELEY, Calif. work without press passes and press could be converted to offshun press conferences. They tend to differ from the overground press in objectivity, fair-

Seek voids

The self-styled members of the fifth estate seek to penetrate voids they see in establishment newspapers. They often perform without regard for safety, Slater

A San Diego Free Press reporter flashed his passport as identification to Secret Service guards to cover President Nixon's visit to Camp Pendleton, he reported. The security officers did not notice the pistolgrip camera he carried in his back pocket, according Slater.

Not all of the fifth estate product is four-letter trivia, he said. A Santa Barbara (Calif.) Probe's report of hospital discrimination, frequent investigations of the community power structure by the Peninsula Observer, published near San Francisco, and the Berkeley Barb's expose of "a million dollar mansion" project for the University of California president were listed

Slater joined Glessing in eval- 2 32. uating the purposefulness of the alternate press. Rejecting the charge that these are tourist papers which was aired at the AEJ convention here, he observed: "As you publishers know for whom they write, so do they." (See E&P Sept. 6).

Five-year move

Since 1964 the underground press has been interesting and has proven valuable in giving insight into our society, according to Slater.

The underground press is something for historians to look back on to see what a disenchanted, alienated era this was, Slater believes. Since 1964 ithas been interesting and has proven valuable in giving insight into society, he said.

The technical advantages of offset have enabled this return to the cra of quickly-established newspapers. William Allen White thought this period when "a printer was a shirt-tail of type" could establish because of costly equipment re-

quirements.

set for \$26, He also pointed out that the overground press prints 25 underground papers in San Francisco alone.

Publisher view

This also is a revival of the yellow journalism of Horace Grceley's day, publishers charged in the question period. They asked if they could publish such obscenity and remain in

Underground publishers wish to reflect something not found in the vernacular or honkey press, have added advertising to their resources since 1966 and have upped circulations, the questioners were told. A few now foresee entries into television and movies.

"You created the vacuum. Why don't you do something about it, such as providing an outlet by printing letters for youth," the panelists submitted.

Establishment press publishers also "can turn youth on the graphics," said Glessing. He referred to special art displayed in large space and the San Francisco Oracle's use of six to eight colors by using split ink fountains.

Policies vary W

Two young pros from the metropolitan field displayed modernized weekly newspapers which they have adapted to the special needs of their separate communities.

William A. Drake, who became editor of the Pacific (Calif.) Tribune from United Press, covers community police news and little league sports intensely. The Tribune puts great store on obits.

Steve McNamara, former San Francisco Examiner Sunday magazine editor who became San Rafael (Calif.) Pacific Sun publisher in 1967, shuns sports and weddings. He does not believe .. HOWS.

The Pacific Sun likes to devote itself to stories of continuing value and offers reports on government, politics and drugs. Contending with the daily San Rafael Independent-Journal's full news coverage, the Sun uses big spreads on things the community will remember.

(Calif.) Tribune publisher, told the skahop of his opposition to the national press council proposal presented here during sessions of journalism teachers.

A national council poses the problem of who is competent for membership, he declared, adding: "I'm not sure it would work and I don't think you want a British Press Council plan."

A local press council can be of benefit if a newspaper has problems, he submitted. The Tribune was one of the papers holding a local council under the direction of Stanford's Dr. William Rivers, who presented the national plan to AEJ.

"You have to work at the local council plan to make it work," Spangler warned.

Aquarius era

Printing's "turn-on" in this age of Aquarius capabilities also were underscored in a workshop session on newspaper design and format, when Mel Warenback, graphic arts designer and pro-motion director, Kaiser Tele-vision, declared this is an era where feelings rather than facts have greatest impact.

There are times when print advertising will not sell because of self-imposed regulations. Yet television advertisers use 60second and even 30-second spots effectively, he said, warning that people who can absorb a total concept in 30 seconds will become impatient with you" in facing a full page of print.

Offset publishers have been liberated from their marriage with tradition. If they do not find time to improve their papers the reader will not take time to read, warned Joseph Holton of Holton Typography, San Francisco.

Howard Taylor, editorial consultant for Copley Press and makeup columnist for E&P, de-

he would argue against

"li it impedes reading, why use it in newspapers," he sub-mitted. Odd designs and complicated drawings draw the eyes away from texts, straight matter, clash, and are ink traps, Taylor said.

In comparison, Taylor reported on the widely researched and highly promoted page designs of Chicago Today. He also bespoke the creation of instant white space, and the use of "down" heads.

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Raymond Spangler, Peninsula Glessing said a small printing Newspapers Incorporated of-